

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 ACDA-12 COME-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 HA-05
MCT-01 SY-05 /105 W
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R 131040Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6723
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC
CINCEUR

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 3673

MILITARY ADDRESSEES FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, PK
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY AT THE CROSSROADS

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD A-43 (B) ISLAMABAD 3457 (C) ISLAMABAD 3212

1. SUMMARY - THE PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY (PPP), BUILT IN THE
IMAGE OF FORMER PRIMIN BHUTTO, IS IN THE PROCESS OF SPLITTING
INTO TWO ANTOGONISTIC GROUPS. ONE STILL CLUSTERS AROUND
BHUTTO, FAVORS CONFRONTATION WITH THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION
(MLA), AND COMPRISES BOTH HARD-CORE IDEOLOGUES AND THOSE WITH
NOWHERE ELSE TO GO. THE OTHER "WING" APPEARS TO BE COALIESCING
AROUND LONG-TIME POLITICIAN KAUSER NIAZI, SUPPORTS COOPERATION
WITH THE MLA, AND IS COMPOSED OF THOS UNCOMFORTABLE WITH
BHUTTO RADICALISM, WHOME WHO FEAR MLA ACTIONS AGAINST THEM,
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AND SOME OTHERS WHO ARE EAGER FOR THE BENEFITS OF COOPERA-
TION WITH THE GOVERNMENT.

2. WE BELIEVE BHUTTO REMAINS THE MOST CHARISMATIC POLI-
TICIAN IN THE COUNTRY, BUT CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRA-
TOR (CMLA) GENERAL ZIA SEEMS DETERMINED TO DECIMATE THE
BHUTTO WING OF THE PARTY. THIS WING, NOW LED BY BEGUM

BHUTTO, WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY BELEAGUERED AND, IF THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER IS EXECUTED, MAY BECOME MORIBUND. IN THE SHORT-TERM, THE NIAZI WING OF THE PARTY WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO GAIN STRENGTH AS IT REAPS THE BENEFITS OF COOPERATION WITH THE MILITARY. OVER THE LONG TERM, HOWEVER, ITS IDENTIFICATION WITH THE MILITARY WILL WORK AGAINST IT.

3. WE SHOULD ADD THAT SOMEONE WILL EVENTUALLY INHERIT THE BHUTTO POLITICAL LEGACY. WE CANNOT PREDICT IF IT WILL BE A MODERATE OR A NEW MORE RADICAL VERSION OF THE OLD BHUTTO. WHAT IS EVIDENT, HOWEVER, IS THAT UNTIL THIS ISSUE IS RESOLVED, WE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE TO WORK WITH MINORITY, ESSENTIALLY CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENTS IN PAKISTAN WITH QUESTIONABLE LEGITIMACY, LITTLE POPULAR SUPPORT, AND NO GUARANTEE OF PERMANENCY FOR THEIR POLICIES. THIS WILL BE TRUE FOR A "NATIONAL GOVERNMENT" UNDER MLA AUSPICES AS WELL AS FOR ANY MINORITY GOVERNMENT WHICH SUCCEEDS IT. END SUMMARY

4. THE PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY (PPP), THE VEHICLE WHICH FORMER PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO BUILT AND DROVE, IS SHOWING STRAINS FROM NINE MONTHS IN THE POLITICAL WILDERNESS AND EXTRAORDINARY PRESSURES AGAINST IT BY THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION. THE DIVISION IN THE PARTY BETWEEN LEFT AND RIGHT, WHICH BHUTTO MASTERFULLY PAPERED OVER, HAS WIDENED SECRET

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TO A CHASM AND THE PARTY HAS, IN REALITY, BECOME TWO.

5. ONE PPP STILL CLUSTERS AROUND THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER AND HIS SURROGATE AND SPOUSE - BEGUM NUSRAT BHUTTO. ALTHOUGH TYPICAL POLITICAL LABELS EASILY BECOME MEANINGLESS, THE BHUTTO WING IS THE MORE "LEFTIST", RADICAL SEGMENT OF THE PARTY. ITS IDEOLOGY IS BHUTTO'S, AND ITS PRIMARY GOALS ARE TO REGAIN POLITICAL POWER AND TO RETURN THE SCEPTER TO ZULFIQAR ALI BHUTTO.

6. WITHIN THIS "WING" A HARD CORE OF THE FORMER PPP LEADER-

SHIP, COMPOSED OF TWO ELEMENTS, SURROUNDS THE BHUTTOS. THE TRUE IDEOLOGUES REMAIN LOYAL TO BHUTTO AND TO THEIR PERCEPTION OF THE "PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION" HE PROMISED TO LEAD. THEY ARE SMALL IN NUMBER BUT ARE REVERENT FOLLOWERS. A LARGER GROUP ENCOMPASSES THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY MADE SACRIFICES FOR BHUTTO, ARE SEEN BY THE MILITARY AS IRREVOCABLY TIED TO THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER AND CONSEQUENTLY HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO GO. BOTH ELEMENTS OF THIS PRO-BHUTTO WING FAVOR CONFRONTATION WITH THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION

(MLA), AND SOME UNDOUBTEDLY ADVOCATE VIOLENCE.

7. THE OTHER "WING" OF THE PARTY APPEARS TO BE COALES-
CING AROUND BHUTTO'S FORMER MINISTER OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
MAULANA KAUSER NIAZI. NIAZI FAVORS COOPERATION WITH THE
MLA AND SUPPORTS PARTICIPATION IN GENERAL ZIA'S PROPOSED
"NATIONAL GOVERNMENT". IT IS A DIVERSE GROUP, INCLUDING
THOSE WHO WERE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE BHUTTO RADICALISM,
THOSE
WHO ARE PREPARED TO WRITE OFF BHUTTO TO GATHER SOME
OF THE BENEFITS OF POWER - EVEN IF IT IS ONLY IN A NATIONAL
GOVERNMENT - AND THOSE INTIMIDATED BY FEAR OF MLA ACTIONS
AGAINST THEM FOR PAST MISDEED ACTION OF THE SIND PPP

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LEADERS, KAMAL AZFAR, TOLD POLICONS IN EARLY APRIL THAT
MANY IN THE PARTY ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO MYRESSURE FROM THE
MLA, AND HE IMPLIED THAT THE MILITARY HAS NOT HESITATED
TO USE SUCH PRESSURE.

8. THE SPLIT IN THE PARTY IS NOT YET FORMAL, AND BOTH
WINGS SAY THEY SPEAK FOR THE "TRUE" PPP. BEGUM BHUTTO
HAS ANNOUNCED THAT NIAZI WOULD BE REMOVED FROM THE PARTY,
BUT BECAUSE OF THE BAN ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY, THE PARTY'S
CENTRAL COMMITTEE HAS NOT ACTED ON HER RECOMMENDATION.
NIAZI RESPONDS THAT THE PARTY IS NOT A FAMILY FIEFDOM
AND CANNOT ACCEPT "MOTHER-DAUGHTER LEADERSHIP" (A REFER-
ENCE TO THE BEGUM AND HER POLITICALLY ACTIVE DAUGHTER
BENAZIR).

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R 131040Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 3673

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT, PARAS 10 & 11)

MILITARY ADDRESSEES FOR POLAD

9. KAMAL AZFAR CONTENTS THT BHUTTO STILL HAS A HOLD ON "THE HEARTS" OF MANY IN RURAL PUNJAB AND SIND. HE ADMITS, HOWEVER, THAT THE PARTY DOES NOT HAVE A DISCIPLINED STRUCTURE WHICH CAN SUSTAIN MASSIVE CONFRONTATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT. WE ALSO ASSUME THAT THE LOYALTY OF SOME PARTY WORKERS WILL WAVER IN THE FACE OF CONTINUING PRESSURE FROM THE MILITARY AND DIMINISHING CHANCES OF A BHUTTO RETURN TO POWER. IF A "NATIONAL GOVERNMENT " IS FORMED WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF THE NIAZI PPP, THE SCENT OF SPOILS WILL ATTRACT MANY WHO ARE STILL UNDECIDED. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, WE ACCEPT AZFAR'S CONTENTION THAT BHUTTO REMAINS THE MOST CHARISMATIC AND POPULAR FIGURE FOR MANY PAKISTANIS.

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10. CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION (CMLA) GENERAL ZIA HAS SIGNALLED THAT HE PLANS TO CRACK DOWN EVEN HARDER ON THE BHUTTO WING OF THE PARTY. EVEN THOUGH SUPPRESSSION OF THE PPP CANNOT QUELL THE SLOWLY GROWING PUBLIC UNEASE WITH THE MLA, ZIA SEEMS DETERMINED TO EXORCIZE WHAT HE SEES AS AN EVIL IN THE PAKISTAN BODY POLITIC. HIS CRITICISM OF "LEFTISTS" (REFAIR), THE GOVERNMENT'S CLAIM IT HAS UNCOVERED A SABOTAGE PLOT ENGINEERED BY LEFTIST ELEMENTS (REFTEL B), THE COURT ACTIONS AGAINST FORMER PPP LUMINARIES, AND THE MLA'S MOVES AGAINST THE LAHORE EDITION OF THE PPP NEWSPAPER (THE KARACHI EDITION IS PUBLISHING), ARE ALL CLEAR SIGNALS THAT THE MLA INTENDS TO DECIMATE THE BHUTTO WING OF THE PARTY. SOME JOURNALISTS SPECULATE THAT THE MLA MAY ACTUALLY BAN THE BHUTTO WING.

11. IN OUR JUDGEMENT, BHUTTO WING OF THE PARTY IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY BELEAGUERED, ISOLATED, AND ENERVATED. IT KNOWS IT CANNOT ACHIEVE REDEMPTION ON ITS OWN BUT MUST WAIT

FOR DISCONTENT WITH THE MLA TO BECOME SO GREAT THAT BHUTTO IS SWEEPED BACK TO POWER IN A POPULAR UPRISING. THE NATION IS NOT YET CLOSE TO THAT SITUATION, AND TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR THE BHUTTO WING. IF THE FORMER PM IS EXECUTED, THE LEADERSHIP WHICH SUPPORTS HIM REMAINS IN JAIL, AND PARTY WORKERS DRIFT AWAY FOR GREENER PASTURES, EVEN IF POPULAR DISCONTENT WITH THE MLA CONTINUES TO GROW, THERE MAY BE NO BHUTTO PPP TO PROFIT FROM THE UNHAPPINESS. IF BHUTTO'S LIFE IS SPARED, HE MAY ONE DAY RETURN TO POWER IN THIS POLITICALLY UNPREDICTABLE COUNTRY. IF THAT HAPPENS, A PPP IN THE BHUTTO IMAGE, COULD BE QUICKLY RESURRECTED, EVEN THOUGH IT WOULD HAVE LONG BEEN MORIBUND.

12. CONGEN LAHORE NOTES THAT AT THIS TIME KAUSAR NIAZI
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APPEARS TO BE LITTLE MORE THAN THE "LEADER OF A CABAL, WITH NO MASS SUPPORT". HIS WING OF THE PARTY COULD GAIN STRENGTH IN THE SHORT-TERM, HOWEVER, AS IT REAPS SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF THE TACIT BLESSING OF THE MLA. THE GROWTH OF THE NIAZI GROUP WILL ALLOW THE MLA TO CLAIM THAT THE "REAL" PPP, CLEANSSED OF CORRUPT AND RADICAL ELEMENTS, IS STILL ALIVE AND WELL AND PARTICIPATING IN THE NATION'S POLITICAL LIFE. IN REALITY, HOWEVER, A NIAZI PPP WOULD BE INEVITABLY TIED TO THE FORTUNES OF THE MLA, NOT A PROPITIOUS HARBINGER OF THE GROUP'S LONG-TERM VIABILITY. ASSUMING BHUTTO IS ELIMINATED, THE NIAZI WING, OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS, WILL PROBABLY FOLLOW THE COURSE OF THE SEVERAL MUSLIM LEAGUES PAKISTAN HAS SEEN SINCE INDEPENDENCE --- A SHELL OF ITS FORMER SELF, A WEAK SHADOW OF THE "REVOLUTIONARY" PARTY WHICH BHUTTO BUILT AND LED TO ELECTORAL VICTORY.

13. EVEN THOUGH THE BHUTTO PPP HAS ONLY A NEGLIGIBLE CHANCE TO PLAY A REJUVENATED NATIONAL POLITICAL ROLE IN THE NEAR FUTURE, THE POLITICIZATION OF PAKISTANI POLITICS WHICH BHUTTO ENGENDERED HAS REMAINED STRONG, AND THE DEMISE OF HIS PPP WILL LEAVE A VACUUM IN THE NATION'S POLITICAL SCENE. AS AN ANTI-BHUTTO PAKISTANI BUSINESSMAN IN ISLAMABAD RUEFULLY TOLD AN EMBOFF RECENTLY, "BHUTTO INJECTED THE NATION WITH RADICALISM, AND WE CAN'T FIND AN ANTIDOTE".

14. SOMEONE OR SOME PARTY WILL EVENTUALLY INHERIT THAT BHUTTO LEGACY. IT SEEMS UNLIKELY NIAZI WILL BE ABLE TO DO SO. THE UNANSWERED QUESTION IS WHETHER ANY RELATIVELY MODERATE LEADER WILL BE ABLE TO CHANNEL THE FORCES RELEASED BY BHUTTO INTO PRODUCTIVE CHANNELS, OR WHETHER A NEWER AND MORE "REVOLUTIONARY" BHUTTO WILL EMERGE. WHILE THIS

ISSUE IS BEING RESOLVED, WE WILL BE DEALING WITH MINORITY
AND ESSENTIALLY CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENTS IN PAKISTAN WHICH
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HAVE SEVERE LEGITIMACY PROBLEM, LITTLE POPULAR SUPPORT,
AND A STRONG IMPULSE TOWARD AUTHORITARIAN RULE. THEY WILL
ALSO BE GOVERNMENTS UNABLE TO TAKE LONG-TERM
DECISIONS IN FOREIGN OR DOMESTIC MATTERS WITH ANY
CONFIDENCE THEIR POLICIES WILL STICK. THIS WILL BE TRUE
FOR ANY "NATIONAL GOVERNMENT" UNDER MILITARY AUSPICES
AS WELL AS ANY MINORITY GOVERNMENT WHICH FOLLOWS.
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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 13 apr 1978
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
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